

Lord Somerville 8135
from the author
THE

E F F E C T S
OF THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION,

WITH RESPECT TO THE INTERESTS OF
HUMANITY, | RELIGION, AND
LIBERTY, | MORALITY.

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AUTHOR OF THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL TRANSACTIONS, ETC.
DURING THE REIGN OF KING WILLIAM.

*Quod procul a nobis flectat fortuna gubernans,
Et ratio potius quam res persuadeat ipsa.*

LUCRETIVS, L. v. l. 108.

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M DCC XCIH.

E R R A T A.

- Page 6.** l. 11. from bottom, *for* swore *read* *sworn*
23. *for* consequence *read* consequences
29. l. last, *dele* even
55. l. 18. *for* character *read* characters
81. l. 16. *after* would *read* expect to
86. l. 5. from bottom, *for* right *read* rights



THE
E F F E C T S
OF THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION, &c. &c.

WHEN persons, who have been accustomed to think and to act together, happen to disagree in opinion upon any question of moment, they seldom confine themselves to a fair discussion of its merits, but descend to personalities ; and upbraid each other with inconsistency and corruption. The late affairs of France, more than any subject of foreign politics, have divided the opinions, and alienated the affections of men, who were formerly united by the harmony of their sentiments, not less than by their common zeal for the party to which they belonged.

The persons, in this country, who have made up their minds upon French politics, and who dispute and write upon that subject, may be arranged under three several classes or descriptions. The first comprehends those, who, from the beginning, disapproved of the Revolution in
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France, and all the measures pursued in consequence of it. To the second, are to be assigned those who approved of that Revolution, as dictated by sound patriotism, and necessary, expedient, and beneficial to the people. The third class, having formerly agreed with these, are also wellwishers to the second Revolution, which had for its object the dissolution of the monarchy, and the establishment of a republic; and though they do not openly and directly justify the measures by which it has been effected, yet many of them discover unequivocal symptoms of an inclination to palliate them, and to acquit their authors of the heavy charges which have been brought against them.

To the first class, no shadow of inconsistency can be imputed; and however erroneous or dangerous their principles may be, they are not denied the merit of being true to them, while they arraign indiscriminately the whole series of measures adopted by the Revolutionists in France, since the first invasion of regal authority. It may appear more difficult to determine, where the inconsistency lies, and to settle the controversy between the second and third classes; namely, those who approved of the first Revolution, but went no farther; and those who have gone on approving, and are as much the friends

friends of the present Convention, as they were of the first National Assembly.

Having thought favourably of the first French Revolution, and wished well to it, because I believed that it was calculated to remove oppression, to promote the interest of humanity, liberty, religion, and virtue, I must become false to every principle by which I profess to regulate my conduct, if I now viewed, with favour or indulgence, a train of measures which have thwarted these ends; and engendered tyranny, immorality, cruelty, and profaneness, without any parallel in the history of monarchical government. Humanity is the compass by which I steer my political course, and it must ever keep me far from regions abounding with oppression, and polluted with blood.

I. It must be obvious to every person of discernment, not to say feeling, that the turn of affairs in France, since the subversion of the monarchy, has been productive of the most enormous cruelties. It were equally distressful and superfluous, to enter into a detail of events so recent and awful; nor is it possible to affix to them any epithets of detestation, adequate to the indignant emotions and deep affliction, by which they have been engraven upon the hearts of the virtuous and compassionate. In this view, the authors of them may be considered

considered as enemies to the peace of mankind, in every region of the universe. From the frame of our nature, it is impossible, that we can be indifferent to the sufferings of our fellow creatures, at any time, or in any place. The painful sensations, produced by reading the history of calamitous events in ages and countries remote, are faint and transient, in comparison with those, which are excited by the sight or recital of similar events, in our own times, and which come nearer to our own case*. As the lapse of time gradually blunts the edge of sorrow occasioned by domestic calamities, so a long interval operates at once to the same effect, by checking acuteness of feeling, and by contracting duration of sorrow, for the miseries of mankind which happened ages before we were born.. The evidence of their existence seems to be impaired by the succession of years which have intervened; and a dissimilitude of manners, sentiments and interests, place the sufferers in a subordinate rank, and
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* If the feeling for past calamities was as intense, as for those which are present or near, the life of man would be a continued scene of sorrow and unprofitable sympathy; whereas the quick perception of surrounding miseries admits of long intervals of tranquillity, while it stimulates to exertions, which may often remove or mitigate the sufferings which are the objects of it.

among a different species of beings. Resemblance of external circumstances, and a variety of analogies, render the operation of pity more prompt and lively towards our unfortunate cotemporaries. The minuteness of detail; the series and succession of sufferings; the specification of names; the dignity and distinction of the sufferers, give a precision to our ideas; and confer a force upon evidence, which absorbs our attention, and interests us, with the deepest concern, in tragical scenes passing under our own eye. The proscriptions in ancient Rome; the massacre of the infant children in Judea; the cruelties of the Spaniards in America; are events, of which we read with horror, rather than sorrow; neither do they settle in the mind, nor long interrupt our business or pleasure. But, the sufferings of African slaves now going on; the ferocious massacre of the Swiss guards*; and the
butchering

* The friends of the French Convention seem to consider it, as a matter of great importance, to ascertain, whether the Parisian mob, or the Swiss guards, fired first upon the 10th of August 1792, as if the whole dispute turned upon this hinge. For my own part, I do not think it of the least consequence how the question is determined; nor, as circumstances stood, supposing it proved that the Swiss guards began the fire,
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butchering of prisoners in cold blood; the murder of an innocent prince, who, if it had not been for the goodness of his heart, would never have been at the mercy of his enemies; of a helpless woman, whose descent, and beauty, and previous sufferings, must have wrung compassion from the most obdurate heart; the violation

will it acquit the Parisians of the charge of brutal assassination.

The Parisian mob had often threatened the destruction of the Swiss; the day preceding the attack, they were employed in collecting arms and cannon, and had invited multitudes of desperate men, from every part of the country, as auxiliaries. In the morning of the fatal day, they advanced in great force to the Thuilleries with the professed purpose of attacking the guards; pressed forward, and gained ground upon them. Did not every principle of self-defence, as well as the obligations of duty, impose upon the Swiss the indispensable necessity of resistance? Would they not have been guilty of pusillanimity, faithlessness, and infatuation, if they had not resisted? I have the most certain assurance, that a man has sworn to take away my life; I see him approaching with a firelock in his hand; he elevates it, takes his aim at me, is just drawing the trigger, when I fire upon him, and save my life at the expence of his. Is there any court of justice which would condemn me for murder? Is there any individual, who would not, from the instinctive impulse of his own sympathy, applaud what I had done?

The massacre of the Swiss guards, I consider as one of the most wanton, ferocious deeds ever committed in a civilized country; and I cannot help suspecting the heart of the man who vindicates it.

violation of every circumstance of tenderness and delicacy ; the contrivance of every indignity that could aggravate the horrors of the last scene ; these instances, so tragical and so near, overwhelm the hearts of the humane, in every country, with anguish and amazement. It is impossible to forget them ; they continually press upon the mind and break its peace ; a perpetual gloom overshadows the imagination, and disturbs the repose of the night with melancholy thoughts, and turbulent dreams. Hence, when we speak or write about miseries that are past long ago, description surpasses our feeling ; but, with respect to those which are immediately present, we cannot utter what we feel ; words poorly convey the hidden anguish of the heart.

Under the influence of these impressions and reflections, the conduct and measures of the French Convention are condemned, not merely for the internal disasters they have produced, but also on account of their more extensive effects, in diffusing affliction, and encroaching essentially upon the tranquillity of mankind at large. As the happiness of the individual depends not upon his own good fortune and behaviour alone, but upon the condition and temper of his friends and neighbours ; so the happiness of collective bodies and detached communities,

munities, must be connected, in some degree, with the behaviour of co-existent communities and societies, not only as such behaviour affects their civil, or political situation, but as it operates upon the unchangeable feelings of the human heart. Let any person of sensibility and reflection compare the state of his mind, with respect to tranquillity and enjoyment during the last three years, with what it was in the preceding period of his life, must he not be convinced, that the crimes and calamities of France have come home to himself, and made a deep breach upon his happiness? Will he not feelingly adopt the exclamation of Job, "Would it were with me" as in the years that are past!" Will he not reckon himself unfortunate in the allotment of his existence, at a period, so much darkened by the guilt and sufferings of his fellow-creatures. The celebrated Mr Gibbons expresses himself, as far as I can remember, to this effect: That, if it had been left to a wise man, to select, from the revolution of ages, the particular period in which he would have wished his own existence to have fallen, he could not have hesitated about preferring the reign of the Antonines; as, in every view, most favourable to virtue and happiness. Considering upon what a tottering basis that happiness must stand, which depends upon the life of an individual; and that, even
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in the peaceful reign of the Antonines, the sword of tyranny was suspended by a single hair, over the heads of a people otherwise free and prosperous, I am not ashamed to differ in opinion from the illustrious historian ; and, without any disparagement to other times and other countries, I should have been well pleased to have lived and died a citizen of Great Britain, after the Revolution 1688. The security of property, the enlargement of liberty, the progress of science and civilization, during that period, ascertain a pre-eminence of domestic and political felicity that will bear a comparison with any former age ; and, if imperfections of Government, and hardships, affecting either individuals or any class of men, still remained, we were consoled by the anticipation of improvement and redress, which, from the extending influence of liberal sentiments, could be at no great distance. But, behold, when the sky promised fixed serenity, the clouds begin to gather, the horizon is darkened, the storm bursts and lays waste the neighbouring fields, and we tremble, lest its spreading fury should next consume our own habitations. To speak without a figure, the depravity of human nature has suddenly broken out into such excess of atrocity, as outdoes all examples of savage ages, and brings indelible disgrace upon the character of our species. Not

only are our feelings outraged, but the dignity of the rational nature is affronted by the flagitious deeds of those who belong to it.

The claim of human nature to dignity may be controverted, and, perhaps, pretensions to it may have been carried too high, and its character embellished by the pride of imagination; but the dignity of human nature, rationally stated, opens a field for speculation, at once pleasing and salutary. A sense of the dignity of our nature, is a powerful restraint upon the baser passions; it is an incentive to the ardent pursuit of virtue, and of noble enterprises; it is a guarantee to society for the worthy conduct of the individual who recognises it. Those who think most unfavourably of our species, will still admit, that human depravity has its measure and limits; but every party in this dispute, whether prone to the extreme of extolling or depreciating our common nature, must acquiesce in the same sentiments and feelings, when they survey the proceedings and conduct of the French convention, namely, that lust of cruelty and exuberance of crimes, have surpassed what they could have imagined or expected to happen in our own age; and will be covered with shame and confusion, upon reflecting, that such things have been done by creatures, who
have

have the form, the faculties, and the affections of men.

Could I believe, that for some mysterious, inscrutable purpose, a supernatural influence was, for a season, permitted to those invisible agents of iniquity, who seek to seduce and ruin the human race; to that influence I should ascribe, not the pestilence, or the famine, or the tempest, however destructive in their effects, not that derangement of the rational faculties, which exhibits the most deplorable condition of humanity; but to such diabolical influence, I should trace the tremendous crimes, that effrontery in the commission of them, that derision and insult over sufferings, which compose the most shocking pictures of human depravity.

As the late outrages of the French nation have wounded the feelings of the humane and virtuous; so it is to be feared, that, by their operation in another way upon the minds and tempers of men, they have a tendency to depreciate the esteem of humanity, and to lessen its influence in every country. There, perhaps, never was any age in which humanity had arrived at a more elevated pitch, than in the western kingdoms of Europe during the course of the present century. As the general approbation of kindness and mercy, the detestation expressed

pressed against cruel and oppressive actions, and the infamy which pursues them, are presumptive proofs of the genius and disposition of the age ; so the fact is still more substantially confirmed by the various plans of beneficence which have been carried into effect in every country in Europe. Greater softness and tenderness not only prevail in the common intercourse of life, but schemes and institutions have been universally adopted, for mitigating and consoling every species of human misery *. I am particularly happy to observe, that the earnest remonstrances which have been presented to the Legislature, in other kingdoms as well as our own, against a species of commerce, the most barbarous and disgraceful to humanity, and the success which they have partially obtained, and the prospect of their soon obtaining complete success, are indisputable testimonies of a general revolt against oppression, and of the diffusion of kind and liberal principles. Flattered by these more than specious appearances, the friends of benevolence fondly believed, that her interests were advancing in every

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* See Howard's account of the improvements adopted in Russia, Vienna, &c. with respect to prisons, hospitals, &c. Frofard's list of the various and liberal plans of charity in France, before the late disturbances. *La Cause d'Esclaves.*

ry country, and that her dominion would spread over all. After such a progress, it seemed almost impossible, that mankind should relapse into the rudeness and ferocity of their fathers. But, alas! the splendid and delightful vision has departed from us. With grief and disappointment, we behold a nation, that has long been considered as the school of politeness and fashion, without any intervention of retrograde steps, plunging at once into the deepest abyss of barbarism; and this, instead of exciting the general voice of alarm and indignation in every country and among every party, rather appears to have contributed to the relaxation of those resentful feelings, and the abatement of that infamy, which, more than human laws, overawe and controul the malignant passions of men. It is a mortifying and alarming truth, confirmed by recent facts, that familiarity gradually reconciles us to the most hateful objects, and deadens the aversion and pain excited by the first sight of them. As the original steps in the French Revolution, were, I sincerely believe, urged by the most pressing necessity, and justified by the most honourable motives; so it gave additional satisfaction to all good men to observe, that they were not only carried into execution with so little violence, but that the plans of future government were formed in the spirit of philanthropy,

philanthropy, and with a professed purpose of preventing wars and the effusion of blood *. If, at that period, one half of the cruelties which have since happened, could have been foreseen, there was not then any person who would not have been ashamed to imagine or suppose the existence of any circumstances whatever that could have justified them ; and yet, after the event, many, I do not say all, many of the friends of the first Revolution, if they do not directly and openly approve, yet they do not appear to be at all dissatisfied with them. Is it not a suspicious circumstance, that they have not, in marked and explicit terms, proclaimed to the world their abhorrence of those abominable and atrocious deeds which have been done by the present leaders in France ? Nay, have not some men of late assumed a higher tone of adulation in speaking of the new revolutionists, as if they had attained to more illustrious virtue, and deserved better of mankind, by overturning a constitution which they themselves had applauded, and murdering the authors of it ? It would have been natural to conclude, that, though no emotions of tenderness had ever stirred within the breasts of those philosophers, who

* I refer the reader to the decrees of the National Assembly, particularly that against making offensive war, *Christie's Letters*, Appendix, p. 113.

who are favourers of the late Revolution in France ; yet, their own reason, a sense of decorum, and a knowledge of human nature, must have suggested to them the prudent artifice of making a distinction between the means and the end ; and of vindicating themselves from any suspicion of their harbouring dispositions congenial with those men, whose characters unavoidably transfer an odium to the measures they have adopted. For the sake of saving their own reputation, and maintaining a consistent respect to that mercy which they had always professed to esteem ; and which some of them, by official obligations, were bound to recommend, ought they not to have entered their protestation against those oppressive measures, lately carried on in France, and to have disavowed all connection or fellowship with the execrable men from whom they have flowed. It is truly distressful to find, that, as if the feelings of men were wearied out and exhausted, by being so incessantly called into action, even those persons, who are neither suspected of insensibility nor disaffection to their country, begin to speak with indifference and coldness of miseries of the first magnitude, and to confound them with the ordinary misfortunes of human life. It were perhaps too severe to condemn men for words and expressions, which

drop from them in the moments of unguarded conversation ; but it must be a ground of serious apprehension to the compassionate and tender-hearted, to discover a sort of concert among persons of literary name, to conceal or palliate French cruelties, and to wipe away that infamy which nature has affixed to them. Have not some of them artfully eluded those expressions, which were the fittest to convey proper apprehensions of the transactions which they relate ? Have they not softened massacres and assassinations with epithets of excesses and irregularities, as if it had been to confound them with the common faults and infirmities of human nature ? Have they not unseasonably extolled the cause of liberty, as if the hypocritical pretensions of a zeal for its interest ought to appease our wrath, or reconcile us to men stained with carnage and bloodshed ? *

Are the friends of humanity too precipitately alarmed, when its importance is thus degraded, and its interests abandoned, by those very persons,

* An author of great reputation in the new school of politics and philosophy, strongly inculcates the propriety of treating about terms of peace with the members of the present Convention, as if their crimes were still overbalanced by the splendour of their virtues.

Be to their faults a little blind,

And to their virtues very kind.

Concert of Kings, ascribed to the Marquis of L ——— e.

sons, who are bound by every tie of zeal for the honour of literature, for the peace of their country, and the happiness of mankind, to vindicate its purity, and uphold its indispensable obligation. Shall we wonder, if the smatterers in composition, the mere mechanical conveyers of the transactions of the day, who never before aspired at the character of sentiment, begin to mimic the tone of the philosopher, and to speak with coldness, perhaps with applause, of those actions which put nature to shame. Having attained the highest refinement of apathy, they feel unexpected elevation in ranking with the brightest luminaries in the literary world.

The French Revolution must, by its consequences, prove diffusively and permanently injurious to the cause of humanity, because it has abounded with examples of outrage and atrocity, which are likely to weaken the restraints of novelty and disgrace, and to embolden bodies of men, in similar circumstances of political fermentation, to advance, without any pause or gradation, to the same maturity of wickedness. The schemers of every Revolution are constrained, at the commencement of their projects, to disguise their purpose of innovation. Nay, they often profess a veneration for the antiquity of the Government which they mean to overthrow, and a zeal for restoring it to its primitive

mitive integrity. The corruptions, the abuses, the innovations which have crept into it, are the evils they wish to reform ; and, above all, they profess to be guided by a sacred regard to the claims of justice and mercy *. Those persons of more respectable character, whose aid is indispensable to Reformers, when entering into their political career, would have shrunk from their company, if they could have penetrated into their designs, or foreseen the unhallowed means, by which these hypocrites have already determined to accomplish them. It is only after their having gained the suffrages and confidence of the people, that such men dare to stretch out the arm of violence, and to inflict severities, at first with affected reluctance, and justified, as they pretend, upon the footing of necessity ; these are often repeated and aggravated, till, at length, the feelings of spectators being extinguished, and even a thirst for blood excited

* A case similar to the progressive stages of the French Revolution, may be found in the Reforming spirit of our own country. It first started with an increase of representation, or a more equal representation ; then shorter parliaments, from seven down to one year by degrees. The beginners of this work thought increase of representation enough, but many, who joined them, looked for more, the new proselytes still extended their plans, and their own imaginary consequence, till at length our Reforming Societies have arrived at the name of the *British Convention*.

excited by the frequent sight of it, they come to perpetrate every species of cruelty, not only without dread of censure or resistance, but with certain advantage to their power and popularity. For indeed, it is impossible to account for the wanton and multiplied enormities committed in France, the very recital of which makes us shudder, without supposing, that the human nature, however humbling the conclusion may be, has become so entirely changed, and so completely debased, as to derive pleasure and gratification from spectacles of horror and barbarity. It is a melancholy fact, that the influence of bad example operates not only upon those who are near spectators of it, but extends to others who read or hear of it. The same pursuits seem to justify the same measures; the name of liberty has, in our own days, and among our contemporaries, given a sanction to carnage and bloodshed, which, it is to be feared, will hereafter be imitated by tumultuary bodies of men, associated in like circumstances, and upon the same pretence. They will not set out with disguise or reserve, nor lose time by training their disciples in the elementary lessons of oppression; but rush, openly and boldly, into all the licentiousness and effrontery of wickedness, exemplified by those, whose principles they applaud, and whose plans they pursue.

purſue. It might appear an inſult to the underſtanding of any man who is acquainted with the hiſtory of a Nero, or a Caligula, to propoſe their examples as models of character ; but the enormities of perſons, who are dignified with the name of patriots in our own days, are not only overlooked and vindicated, but will come to be imitated, without remorse, by thoſe who do ſo.

II. The conduct of the political leaders in France, ſince the diſſolution of the National Aſſembly, has been pernicious to the intereſt of liberty there ; and will certainly contribute to retard its progreſs, and bring ſuſpicions upon its friends in every country. I never yet met with any perſon of ſound underſtanding and of candour, who choſe to ſtand forth as an advocate for the old Government of France, or, who did not acknowledge it to be vicious, arbitrary, and incompatible with the juſt rights of the people. A greater diverſity of opinion has ariſen, with reſpect to the meaſures purſued by the leaders of the Revolution for the Reformation of the Government, and the extension of liberty. But, ſuppoſe perſons to have been at iſſue upon this point, ſuppoſe them to have admitted, that the beginners of the Revolution were actuated by pure and patriotic motives, and that all their reſolutions and plans were

were wise and temperate, as much as was consistent with the object they fought, would it follow, that the persons, who approved so far, were thereby bound to subscribe implicitly to the subsequent transactions of those who afterwards came into the seat of power. Here there are many points to be discussed, all of importance, and particularly these two questions, which afford copious matter for argument. First, whether the certain prospect of improvement required another change of the constitution, or one so violent as the abolition of the monarchy? Secondly, whether necessity and the crisis of circumstances urged it?

The first question, I think, cannot, with consistency, be answered in the affirmative by those persons, who were so decided in their favourable opinion of the constitution established by the first National Assembly, and so liberal in the testimonies they gave to its merits.

The existence of necessity, arising from internal and foreign events, may still be pleaded as an apology for the new Revolutionists, as well as for the praise bestowed upon them, by many, who do not wish to retract their sentiments, or abate their respect for the first constitution. The manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick, the approach of hostile armies, suspicions of the treachery of the King and the General, justly
excited

excited alarm ; and the mighty evils, from these causes impending, could only be prevented by the immediate subversion of the monarchy, and the establishment of Republican Government *. But all this being admitted, will it follow, that the proceedings of the Convention were prudent, expedient, praise-worthy, or at all justifiable ? Nay, must not every man, in conformity to the motives and principles upon which he approved of the first Revolution, abhor and condemn the measures which have been pursued for its destruction : for why did he approve of the first constitution ? He did so, because it was the death-warrant of tyranny ? It was to put an end to arbitrary taxations ; to oppressive forfeitures ; to false accusations ; to clandestine imprisonments ; unjust, summary trials ; wanton executions ; ambition for conquest, destructive of the property and lives of the people. But, if all these evils, instead of being prevented or diminished, have been multiplied and aggravated ;

* The manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick, I admit to have been to the last degree infamous and exasperating ; its immoral tenor, and impolitic tendency, deserve the severest censure. Of the treachery of the King and the General, I have seen no evidence ; on the contrary, I am persuaded, from many circumstances which have since occurred, that the charge against them is unfounded. The admission of it as a fact, will not, however, frustrate or enervate the strain of argument I have pursued.

vated ; how inconsistent to approve of that system to which they must be imputed ?

Shew me that period in the annals of France, when such oppressive exactions have been imposed upon the people, when confiscations have taken place with such rapidity, and to such immense extent ; when false accusations have so much abounded ; when convictions have followed upon such frivolous and dubious evidence ; when every form of justice has been so audaciously violated ; when prisons have been so much crowded ; when such oceans of innocent blood have been ferociously drawn, or shed by the hands of the executioner ; when such merciless insults have been poured upon the sufferers ; when such invidious plans of conquest threatened the convulsion of every state in Europe * ? What a shame for any rational friend to liberty to devise, or listen, with patience, to any apology for men who have been so deeply flagitious, and the authors of such complicated miseries.

Let any man make a fair enumeration of all the oppressions and calamities in France, which proceeded from the tyrannical spirit of the

* The inordinate ambition and intrigues of Louis XIV. were, neither in their immediate nor remote consequence, so formidable to the peace of all the European states, as the decree of the Convention, on the 19th November, for fraternizing and assisting insurgents in every country.

the Government, or the corruption of the Court for a century past, and let him next put down, in the opposite column, similar events which have happened within the last two years, and especially under the rule of the Convention, and then let him strike the balance, how will the account stand? I think I may venture to affirm with confidence, that, at the most moderate calculation, and reckoning that the future would have been no worse than the past, at least a century of the old government, tyrannical as it was, must have elapsed, before it could have produced an equal list of calamities and of crimes. But, in order to make the comparative estimate, I now suggest, with perfect accuracy, we ought to annex to the charge against the Convention somewhat more than has been already expressed, upon account of unseen, but not less real miseries, which are incident to a new Revolution, and cannot happen under a stable government, the most vicious and arbitrary; the sudden degradation of individuals and families; the consternation and horror, which continually haunt the breasts of those who are in the scene of turbulence and anarchy, and particularly those of the softer and timid sex; the insults, the brutality, to which they are inevitably exposed; the sorrows which tear affectionate hearts for the unmerited sufferings

ings and cruel catastrophe of their dearest relations; the deplorable condition of children, not only deprived of comfortable subsistence and parental protection, but inured to habits of falsehood, treachery, and cruelty. To the account of the Convention, all this may be added.

It is also unquestionably reasonable and fair, in forming a calculation of the future evils which might have arisen from the continuance of the ancient Government in France, to make some deduction on account of the increase of civilization, of more correct apprehensions of justice, and the rights of man; and for the temper and example of the late Sovereign; all of which might have redounded to the immediate removal and mitigation of grievances, as well as to the prevention of them in future.

Now let us suppose, that the present confusions shall at length be productive of a plan of civil Government, the most perfect the world ever saw; yet, if its continuance is not insured for a very long period indeed, it will not, after all, pay or compensate the French nation, and mankind, for the mischiefs already done. But who can fortel the term of the miseries which now rage in France? Who can fortel what the species of government may be which shall rise out of them? Is it not, at least, a possible case, that it may be worse than the former one with

all its imperfections on its head ; and that, into whatever hands the executive power may fall, whether those of a prince, or oligarchy, or representative assembly, the whole strength of their power will be exerted to exact securities for their own defence and stability, at the expence of the liberties of the people.

The change of public measures and of ministers and rulers, which have taken place in different stages of the same government in France, have introduced a confusion and perplexity into the ideas of liberty, tending to debase its purity, and to mislead the zeal and efforts of its unenlightened votaries.

A false association of ideas has been in all ages the most fertile source of error and prejudices, and also the greatest obstruction to the correction and removal of them. The first revolutionists in France proclaimed war against despotism, and all the wellwishers of liberty rallied under their standard. Some of the plans they pursued might perhaps appear, to their more discerning friends, neither the fittest for obtaining the glorious end they had in view, nor perfectly consonant to the spirit by which they professed to be actuated. It was, however, a crisis of emergency, when some allowance ought to be made for mistake and misconduct. Victory declared for the friends of liberty ; they seem-
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ed to have surmounted every difficulty ; and triumphed in the success of their labour, and the congratulations of good men. A season of national peace and prosperity ensued : It was, alas ! but a short season. Men, who had contracted a taste for power, could not be at rest when divested of it. The great body of the people, nursed in the school of slavery, were ill prepared either for comprehending rational theories of liberty, or for using the gift of it with moderation and advantage. Their conduct was excentric and irregular, like the aukward, staggering motions of the man, whose members have been benumbed and distorted by the long incumbrance of fetters. A mass of people, who had suddenly made the transition from the severest restraints to the extreme of relaxation, supposing they had been left entirely to themselves, must have been incapable of employing with discretion the benefits of liberty ; but, perhaps, they were also deceived and misguided by the imprudence, or ill designs of those who had contributed to their emancipation. The very language to which they had been accustomed, and the promises held forth to them at the commencement and during the continuance of the struggle, planted the seeds of disappointment and inquietude under their new condition, however preferable it might be to that from which they had

had been extricated. Equality had been much talked of; and it was natural for them to understand the word in the most obvious sense, and in the utmost latitude of interpretation. Their rights to chuse their own government; to interfere in the exercise of it; had been so strongly inculcated, that it was no wonder if they fondly believed, that the supreme and constant direction of it belonged to them; and, when excluded from that, they thought it a duty they owed to themselves and their country, to assume the executive department. Under the dominion of these sentiments and dispositions, how well prepared to become instruments in the hands of those restless, ambitious men, who languished under the inconsequence and obscurity of private civism; or who, perhaps, were stung with envy at beholding the fortune and elevation of those, who had started from the same post with themselves but a few months before. With such combustibles in the hands of such incendiaries, what a dreadful conflagration might there not have been expected? Not attending to their spirit and to their measures, and perhaps not capable of discerning the one, or of judging of the other, multitudes have implicitly adhered to the French republicans through all their enormities, because they still maintained the language and pretensions, which had been honestly assumed by those who first took
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the field against tyranny; nay, it is to be feared, that the conduct and measures of the Republicans, associated with their pretensions, have contaminated and perverted the very notions of liberty. The ideas of liberty and anarchy, of liberty and cruelty, of liberty and profaneness, are so interwoven, that with some, the one has fallen into reproach, while, with others, the appendages have been elevated into the character of virtues. When we observe from history, the zeal all sects have discovered for palliating and justifying the basest means, which have been employed by their leaders for promoting their peculiar interests and opinions, we need not wonder that a similar delusion has bewitched thousands, whose passions have been engaged in a dispute carried on under their own eye, and into which they have entered with all the ardour of partizans. If a set of enthusiasts in our own day, like the crusaders of old, should propose to enforce the propagation of Christianity in a Pagan country by fire and sword, there are few who understand that religion so ill, as not to be shocked by the proposal; not only because such means are unlawful in any case, but because it is evident, that the authors of them are utter strangers to the spirit of the religion which they profess to patronize, and incapable even of conveying any sound notions of it, even
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by the ordinary, legitimate method of calm instruction. The enlightened, benevolent Christian is not distinguished from the enthusiastic, persecuting bigot, by plainer strokes of character, than the friend of genuine and rational liberty is from the man, who wildly contends for that which is altogether spurious, and destructive of its very essence. The former is under the direction of principles, by which he examines every scheme and project which pretend to the promotion of freedom; the latter follows every standard that bears the letters or inscription of the name, and is obedient to the most tyrannical edicts, and perpetrates the most oppressive deeds, while liberty is the word of the day. The first French Revolution not only assumed the title, but, from the effects it produced, had a fair claim to applause, and united both the real and pretended friends to liberty. The second put them to the test, and made the separation. The true friends of liberty were mortified and depressed, when a system so friendly to her interests was overturned. Far from attaching to the persons who had done this, they recoiled from them as from objects of abhorrence; because they had not only blasted a good work, but, from the infamous means they had employed, introduced a diffidence and scepticism, with respect to the expedience and safe-

ty of attempting great political changes. It is difficult to conceive, upon what ground it is possible for the persons, who lavished such encomiums upon the first constitution, to acquit themselves of the charge of the most flagrant inconsistency, when they stand forth as advocates for those who have destroyed it. There is even something unfeeling and ungrateful in their conduct towards the first class of French patriots, who were the objects of their early affection. They have not only abandoned them as soon as fortune began to frown, but they have joined in their persecution, by giving credit to all the malignant tales and unfounded allegations, insidiously circulated by those unprincipled men who supplanted them. They have lent their hand to erect the patriotism of a Petion, a Danton, a Santerre, upon the wrecked reputation of a Rochefaucauld, Fayette, Bailli. The strange inconsistency of this behaviour might be illustrated by supposing, that something, similar to what has occurred in France, had actually happened with respect to an illustrious event, contained in the annals of our own nation. The friends of liberty have ever recognised with applause the Revolution 1688, and the promoters of it have been the objects of their highest esteem, and warmest gratitude. But
suppose,

suppose that, from the influence of corrupt men, affairs had taken a different turn; suppose that a restless faction, not satisfied with the redress of grievances, had overset the happy system of government then established, and plunged their country into new scenes of confusion and blood; could the persons of whom I speak, if they had lived at that time, in conformity to their principles, could they have approved of such conduct, or rejoiced in such consequences? In short, must not a certain line be drawn, upon the one side, between liberty and anarchy, as well as between liberty and tyranny on the other? Is there not a fixed boundary, beyond which the friends of peace and order cannot pass? and if it were not so, would not every nation in the universe be embroiled in an endless state of internal warfare and convulsion?

There are two errors into which persons in our circumstances are extremely liable to fall, in forming a judgement concerning the present politics in France; and, among the number of persons deceived, there may be some who are not chargeable with such gross inconsistency as I have now described. The first error refers strictly and properly to the French Revolution alone; the second is connected with politics in general, and may be considered as one of the

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heresies,

heresies which clings to superficial adepts in that science.

I. The French Convention has been stated, and too generally understood, to be the adversary of the ancient government of France, and of the corrupt maxims and habits which were predominant in those who ruled under its authority. Taking it for granted that this is the case, and all the errors and vices of that government being recollected, the Convention appears to have a strong claim to the favour and support of all the friends of freedom. But in fact, and agreeably to every principle of fair argument, the Convention ought to be opposed to the National Assembly ; and the system of government, which the Convention has set up, stands in direct opposition, not to the ancient, arbitrary monarchy, but to that constitution which was founded upon its ruin ; and therefore, independent of the sanguinary measures which it has pursued, and the deep enormities with which its members have been stained, the Convention becomes chargeable with treason of the most heinous species. It has laid violent hands upon a constitution, acknowledged to be excellent and beneficent by all the persons who have any part in this argument.

But farther, the maxims and spirit of the new government are more analogous to those of the

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ancient monarchy, than to those of the National Assembly. The constituent Assembly ex-
 ercises ambition, and disavows every plan and
 intention of entering into offensive war, or ma-
 king foreign conquests. The Convention not
 only makes hostile irruptions into the territories
 of neighbouring states; but establishes a system
 for rousing insurrections, and fomenting them in
 every country*. The constituent Assembly
 adopts regulations for preventing malicious accu-
 sations, and for securing the fairest trial to those
 who are so unfortunate as to incur the suspicion
 of guilt. The Convention encourages suspi-
 cion, stimulates information, puts invention to
 the stretch, to multiply delinquencies; and de-
 legates its judicial power to a tribunal, which
 tramples upon every form of justice†. The
 Assembly

* Compare the resolutions of the National Assembly, with
 those of the Convention on the same subject. See decree on
 the Rights of War and Peace, 22d May, 1790, art. 4th.
 Christie's letters, appendix, p. 113. Resolution of the Con-
 vention 19th November, 1792.

† Compare the 7th, 8th, 9th articles of the Rights of Man,
Ibid. p. 42, with the trials of the King, Brissot, &c. and with
 the rules of proceeding, adopted by the Convention with re-
 spect to them, and other persons denounced.

What need the Revolutionary Tribunal stand on formal-
 ties, said a member of the Convention? if it has no material
 proofs, it ought to deem moral proofs or probabilities suf-
 ficient.

Why

Assembly adopts economical rules for the management of the public treasure; for preventing exorbitant taxation, and guarding private property. The Convention surpasses monarchical extravagance, extends confiscations beyond the example of former tyranny, and ordains exactions destructive of industry and domestic enjoyment *. The Assembly ingratiates itself with the friends of liberty by a tender respect

Why have recourse to evidence, said the president of the Convention on the 29th October, where the nation is attacked? The Convention accordingly decreed, that where a trial has lasted three days the president shall open the next sitting by asking the jury if they are satisfied. If they say no, the examination shall continue; if they say yes, the evidence shall be closed and judgement given, and no person shall be allowed to object to the decision of the jury.

In order to substantiate the facts asserted in the text, it is of great importance to attend to the constitution of the Revolutionary Tribunal, and to the characters of its members. The same men continue upon every trial, or make a standing jury; and some of them were not only, like Pethion, Robespierre, Manuel, Marat, &c. the secret advisers and instigators, but the bloody executioners of the massacres of 2d and 3d of September.

* Compare the resolutions of the Assembly, Rights of Man, articles 14, and 17, *Id.* p. 43, and the decree relative to the civil list, June 5th, 1790, *Id.* p. 114, with exactions made by the Convention upon the farmers, merchants, and individuals of every class possessed of fortune; and with the actual expenditure of the Convention, which, within the compass of one year, has exceeded seventy millions Sterling.

spect for conscience, and the most liberal, religious toleration. The Convention exhibits a spirit of intolerance, of irreligious bigotry and persecution, that has no parallel under the plenitude of superstition and ecclesiastical tyranny *. Thus the spirit, the system, the maxims, the conduct of the Convention, form a perfect contrast to those of the first National Assembly.

II. There are many persons, who, from their feelings, are well-wishers to the liberties of mankind, yet, from the scantiness of their historical information,

* Compare the Right of Man, art. 10th, *Id.* p. 42, with the resolutions of the Convention, not only for abolishing the observation of the Sabbath, 1st and 13th of October; but for compelling those who are inclined to observe it in private to open their shops on that day; and with the decrees of the Comune of Paris, 26th November, 1793. As these resolutions have not yet entered into any treatise on this subject, I shall here insert them for the instruction of the reader.

1st, All churches or temples, of whatsoever religion or worship existing in Paris, shall be instantly shut.

2^d, For every tumult, that shall take place in Paris on account of religion, the priests or the ministers of that religion shall be personally responsible.

3^d, Every individual who shall seek for the opening of a church or temple, shall be arrested as a suspicious person.

4th, The Revolutionary committees shall be requested to watch all priests.

5th, The Convention shall be required to pass a decree, importing, that the priests shall not exercise any public functions.

information, and from a confusion of ideas, confine tyranny or the abuse of power, and all the mischiefs which result from that abuse, entirely to a government exercised by one man, or a few. It is an observation of a great political author (Dean Swift) " That tyranny and
 " usurpation in a state are by no means confined to any number ;" and, after adducing many striking examples from the Greek and Roman historians in support of the observation he infers the error of " those who think it an
 " incontrollable maxim that power is safer lodged in many hands than in one ; and that
 " the many are as capable of enslaving a nation, and of acting all manner of tyranny and oppression, as it is possible for a single person to
 " be *." There is not any example specified by the Dean, nor within the compass of history, that more strongly corroborates his observation, than the conduct of the French patriots, since the abrogation of the monarchical branch of the Legislature. If persons could be persuaded to divest themselves of every prejudice and false association, to forget for a while the titles of kings, aristocrates, priests, and the characters annexed to them, occasionally, and in times of turbulence ; if they could forget the names of republicans, conventions, friends of the people,
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* Swift, vol. i. p. 2, 13, 16.

and the virtues, which have often, with as little propriety or evidence, been assigned to them, the delusion would be dissipated. Let them take into their hands the list of the French patriots, and read the names of the members of the Convention as of private persons: let them next define what tyranny is, what usurpation is; let them consider what these men have done, and what they are now doing: If there ever was such a thing as tyranny in the earth, let them say, whether the charge of it is not irresistibly, directly, and fully brought home to them. Is there any form or species of it, they have not exercised? If the invasion of private property, if intolerance of religious and political opinion, if false accusations, if the imputation of guilt without the shadow of evidence, if merciless severity of punishment, if these are characteristics and ingredients of tyranny, then assuredly we cannot hesitate a moment to pronounce, that the French Convention has reached the summit of tyranny. Nay, if the stretch and retention of power, without any actual, criminal exertion of it, constitutes tyranny, is not the French Convention a mass of tyranny? Upon what principles of moral or political justice, has the minority of any assembly, admitting them to be lawfully convened, a right to controul and cashier a majority? Or, if it be contended, that
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the safety of the state required such an apparent deviation from justice and order; and such a singular stretch of authority, as that of the minority's engrossing the power of the whole collective body, by imprisoning some of its members, condemning others, and compelling the rest to fly into exile, or take refuge in lurking places; yet, why shall the people be deprived of franchises, conferred upon them, by that very constitution, which these men have created? Why have not new representatives been summoned from those districts which have become unrepresented, not by any fault of the electors, but merely, we shall suppose, from the treachery and unworthiness of the persons elected? If the jealousy of the English patriots was roused, and an alarm sounded through the whole nation, when the House of Commons preferred a member elected by a minority of voters to one who was the choice of the majority, though rendered incapable at that time of attending upon his duty by the sentence of a court of justice; because such a measure furnished a precedent for encroaching upon the rights of electors in general; what shall we say of a delegated body, that has deprived two thirds of its constituents of their representatives, or what amounts to the same effect, allowed them to remain unrepresented,

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at the most interesting crisis that ever engaged the deliberations of any political assembly ; at a period, when nothing less than the formation and settlement of their constitution is depending *? Ought not the friends of the people, to execrate the audacious imposture of these men, who, while they profess to extend and secure the rights of the people, are acting usurpation and tyranny beyond the example of any open and avowed despot.

We may, I think, without breach of candour, estimate the present miseries of the French nation, compared to what they formerly were, in a proportion to the number of the persons who now exercise the executive government. One tyrant has been destroyed, and some hundreds have sprung from his ashes, every one of whom has imbibed the spirit and acquired the vices of despotism, aggravated by that savage ferocity, which is excited by a state of desperation and the consciousness of the deepest

* According to the first constitution, double returns of members were made by every district to the National Assembly, that, in case of accident, none might be deprived of representation. I have no authority for believing, that the same provision has been made by the new constitution, since, instead of seven hundred members, not above two hundred continue to attend in the Convention.

deepest criminality *. I shall only add to these observations, that the tyranny of a single person, or of a court, can neither be so widely destructive, nor so dangerously incontrollable, as that of a multitude of democrates. Every individual, who makes a part of the tyrannical mass, finds scope for his private piques and resentments; and makes out a list of proscriptions as comprehensive as that of the single tyrant. The weakness of the single tyrant is restrained, whatever his disposition may be, by the awe

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* I do not mean to impute the spirit or vices of tyranny to Louis XVI. From the united testimony of every party, he was distinguished by the mildness and humanity of his disposition; and what is remarkable, his savage murderers have never attempted to bring against him the charge of a single immorality, or any thing that indicated malevolence of temper; however much it might have tended to extenuate their cruelty. But, as the ancient constitution imposed no check or controul upon the vices of the King, and as, in the run of succession, we may calculate upon bad as well as good Princes, I have argued from the supposition of tyranny always existing with the power of committing it, that the argument might be placed in the strongest view.

Monsieur de la Croix, who had an active hand in the Revolution, and was a zealous defender of the new constitution, laments, that under it, the vices of the Court had descended and spread among the lower classes of the people. *Intrigues and low jealousies have found their way to the meanest class of the people! The vices of the great have become the vices of the multitude.*—The Constitutions of the Principal States of Europe.

of the people, but the tyranny of a licentious democracy has no check, while it employs the devoted multitude as the agents of its vengeance against all, who are suspected of being friendly to order and settled government.

The consequences of the Revolution in France have been fatal to the interests of liberty, not only there, but in every country. By the crimes and miseries already recited, and which were perpetrated under the pretext of befriending liberty, persons of strong sensibility are startled at the very sound of the word, become jealous of its rational friends, and hostile to every sober plan for the correction of abuse, and the extension of public prosperity. Their error, and the impropriety of their conduct, flow from an incorrect association of ideas, as well as that of the persons who confound liberty with licentiousness; but the goodness of their hearts not only entitles them to a higher rank of character, but prevents them from being at all, or, at least, in the same degree hurtful to society. Guided by feeling more than by the understanding; and judging by what falls under their own observation, they may not be capable of tracing with accuracy the general connection between cause and effect; or of discriminating and arranging effects, and making a separation between those which are adventitious, and those

which are necessary ; and, from this mistake, they may be the guiltless agents of obstructing liberal designs, and retarding the progress of improvement, but they never do evil wilfully and positively ; they stop their ears from hearing of blood ; peace and order they estimate as the most valuable blessings which heaven bestows or man enjoys ; and in the serene state of society they are its ornament and blessing. The fault of their character is merely of a negative kind, it may accidentally prove an obstruction to good, it can never be the source of evil*. The confounding liberty with licentiousness, is an error which corrupts the heart, and matures it for the unrestrained commission of every species of wickedness.

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* Systems of theology and philosophy are often founded upon the tempers of their authors, and naturally allure adherents of congenial sentiments and feelings ; and induce those who embrace them, from prejudice of education, or the force of abstract argument, to mould their characters according to the spirit and maxims of their system. The Quakers, a respectable and amiable sect, have made the temper above described the basis of their system. The same predominant disposition, which, in the case of individuals, has infringed upon the province of reason, has led them to refine upon the benevolent spirit of Christianity, to a degree incompatible with duties, indispensibly important in the present corrupt state of society. Were Christians what they profess to be, the controversy with the Quakers would be at an end, and neither wars nor oaths would be required.

But I have digressed somewhat from my subject, namely, that the miseries and crimes, flowing from the French Revolution, have unfortunately brought reproach upon liberty itself, and prevented good men from forwarding its interests with that confidence and activity, which might have contributed to its more rapid and extensive progress in the world.

In a political view, the consequences of the French Revolution have been eminently destructive of liberty in every country. If the first constitution had been established, there would have been every ground to hope, that the benefits arising from it, both to the rulers and to the people, would have recommended it by degrees as a model to foreign states and kingdoms, or at least have produced some abatement in the rigours of the arbitrary governments through Europe. The reverse may as naturally be expected from what has actually happened. Warned by the fatal catastrophe of Louis XVI. whose generous sacrifices, and beneficent exertions for the happiness of his people, were so ill requited, what prince will dare to hazard the slightest relaxation, or resign the minutest particle of his power, in concession even to the just and reasonable demands of his people? What prince, however indifferent to his own power, or secure as to his personal safety, if he

is yet moved by the love of his people, will not be staggered about making the experiment of any rational improvement, which may be made a precedent for new demands, and multiplied innovations; and at length open a door for that anarchy which constitutes the last state of human depravity and wretchedness. Thus the ideas of liberty have been perplexed, its character tarnished, its friends discouraged, and its benign influence, instead of being promoted, has been arrested, perhaps for centuries to come, by the hypocrisy, tyranny, and atrocious crimes, of its pretended friends in France.

III. I lament the French Revolution, because the consequences of it have been injurious to the interests of religion and virtue. Where religion has nothing to do with morals, the profession of it may be maintained, consistently with every crime, which the depravity of the hearts of men prompt them to commit; but the Christian religion, untainted with the dogmas and superstitions of human origin, imposes such restraints upon the corrupt passions, and particularly is such an antagonist to inhumanity, that common sense will dictate the abolition of it to every political association bent upon projects, which can only be accomplished through the medium of oppression and bloodshed. The French patriots, too discerning to overlook this connection,

connexion, have uniformly discovered the most inveterate enmity against the Christian religion ; and, though often at variance upon other points, have united in a systematic plan for subverting its influence, and bringing contempt upon the name of its Author. The ministers of religion, among whom we may charitably suppose some to have been sincerely pious and conscientious, are not only held up to derision, without any exception, and without any other crime, than that of being the ministers of religion, but sent into exile, thrust into prisons, and delivered over to be slaughtered by the hands of a frantic and profane mob. The costly furniture of the churches has not been decently removed, but surrendered to the rapacity of the military plunderer. The forms of worship have been discouraged, and generally discontinued ; and legal authority has been interposed to exclude religion from making any part of the education of youth.

The ingenious friends of the French convention may, in the examples alluded to, find something to offer for its persecuting, perhaps, with too much rudeness and precipitancy, a religion which deserved no favour, either at the hands of the enlightened Christian, or the wise politician. It was the frivolous superstition, the bigotted priesthood, the insignificant pageantry,
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of a spurious religion, degrading to reason, obstructive to liberty, disgraceful to Christianity itself, that drew the derision, the discountenance, and finally the vengeance of the new established powers. If such a construction of its conduct could have been formerly admitted, the Convention has now taken care to refute it, and to renounce the officious obtrusion of that charity, which was, perhaps, as little an evidence of the goodness of the heart, as of the discernment of those who exercised it. The Convention has now laid the ax to the root of the tree, and proclaimed to the world the effrontery of their impiety by their late decrees, for the abolition of the Sabbath, and the change of the calendar*.

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* It is strange, that, after such multiplied and decisive proofs of the renunciation of Christianity, any of the publishers of newspapers should have the effrontery to delude their credulous readers, by telling them, that it is only the ceremonies of the Roman Catholic religion which the Convention has renounced. There is more design and villany in this falsehood, than what is generally suspected. Many of their honest readers would take alarm; if they knew the fact, that the Christian religion is abolished in France; but the Roman Catholic religion, being the object of their earliest hatred, makes them applaud the Convention for that very measure, which, if the true circumstances were made known to them, would excite their horror and execration. There is another malignant purpose couched under this misrepresentation: They wish to persuade the people, that the war is car-

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Is it to destroy all sense and impresson of a First Cause, that it will not even tolerate the allotment of a stated portion of time to the acknowledgement of Divine goodness? Is it to obliterate the memory of the most generous Benefactor of mankind, that it has determined, that the

ried on for the re-establishing the Roman Catholic religion, and restoring the Roman Catholic priests to their functions and emoluments.

If this treatise should fall into the hands of any of those persons, who seldom have any other access to information than a lying newspaper, I take this opportunity of assuring them, that it is not the Roman Catholic religion, but every form of Christianity that is now abolished in France. Christianity, the basis of all our most interesting hopes, is now abolished in France. It is true, that bishops and priests were appointed by the Convention, to succeed those who had been murdered and banished; but why were they appointed? Evidently to throw new contempt upon the Christian religion, by a public renunciation of it as a cheat and imposture; and this I am warranted to conclude, from their receiving the applause of the Convention for doing it, and from the motions afterwards made for continuing their salaries, or settling pensions upon them.

To what consummate depravity must those men have arrived, who wish to follow the example of France, to render their fellow-citizens completely wretched in this life, and to deprive them of all consolation from the hope of a future existence; and for what purpose? For the good of posterity, as if it were possible, that those hard-hearted men, who are sporting with the happiness of their cotemporaries, could feel any concern for posterity.

the notation of time shall no more bear his name; and that the date of events, instead of awakening all those grand and animating hopes which are connected with his memory, should transmit to posterity the knowledge of transactions, which, for the honour of human nature, it were to be wished, could be consigned to the shades of eternal oblivion? 'Why do the Heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?' Impious, infatuated men! the friends of religion behold your profaneness with horror and pity; but they deride the folly of your schemes, and defy the futility of your efforts. As long as the sun and moon endure, the existence, the wisdom, and goodness of the Creator shall be recognised with gratitude and with praise. 'The name of the Redeemer shall be precious to them that believe: his dominion shall be everlasting, and his kingdom is that which shall never be destroyed.'

I am not ashamed to confess, that I have been deeply affected with the coldness and indifference with which many who profess, and, I hope, truly believe in Christianity, hear of the contempt and indignities poured upon our religion and its Author, by those men who hold themselves out, not only as the reformers of their own country, but of the world. As for myself, who never could hear the character of

over to be...
and profane mob. The costly furniture of the churches has not been decently removed, but surrendered to the rapacity of the military plunderer. The forms of worship have been discouraged, and generally discontinued; and legal authority has been interposed to exclude religion from making any part of the education of youth.

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my benefactor traduced, without discomposure, should I not have cause to suspect my own sincerity as a Christian, if I did not feel and express somewhat more than cool disapprobation, when the name of God is blasphemed, and the Saviour of the world reviled as an impostor. There is a zeal, that *is not according to knowledge*, and there is a zeal according to knowledge. A zeal for the success of a particular system of doctrines, for external forms of worship, and for favourite sects and denominations may be equivocal, and often is not according to knowledge ; but a zeal for the honour and prosperity of a religion, calculated to render mankind virtuous and happy : if there be in the world a zeal according to knowledge, such is that zeal.

The pernicious effects of the late measures in France, with respect to virtue and moral conduct, may be obviously deduced from the observations already illustrated. The Christian religion, one of its strongest pillars, being overturned, the whole fabric of morality must totter and soon fall to the ground ; but, independent of this connection, the dissolution of Government, by perverting the moral sense, and distorting ideas of right and wrong, makes dreadful havoc of morality. Temptations become too strong for human nature, overset feeble virtues, and convert great talents into the instruments of crimes
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and mischief. Truth, honour, justice, gratitude, friendship, become not only useless, but dangerous. Perfidy, hypocrisy, violence, are necessary for private safety, and are the steps by which bad men ascend to power. A fictitious patriotism atones for every crime; for, in such a state, genuine patriotism, if it still exists, dare not lift up its head. The only patriotism now tolerated, is the supporting the strongest faction, whatever the characters and motives of its members may be. It is a curious fact, that, among the names of the present leaders in the Convention, are some of those, who were so notoriously infamous, that their election into the first Assembly was considered as ominous to the Revolution by the persons who were most anxious for its success*.

As virtues are fictitious, so criminality is imputed to external circumstances, which do not depend upon the will, or affect the moral character of the individual. That disapprobation and censure, which ought to be appropriated to immorality

* In a French address, published at Paris in 1789, the names of Roberfpierre, Pethion, Barnave, &c. are mentioned, as having been notoriously infamous, and the election of them as disgraceful to the National Assembly. Christie's Letters, p. 432. It is remarkable, that the first of them, tho' at the beginning despised and without influence, has been gradually ascending in power, and is now one of the principal leaders in the Convention.

immorality alone, are directed altogether to adventitious qualities. Being a king, or of the blood of a king; an aristocrate, or the relation of an aristocrate; or a priest; are constructed as crimes, and prosecuted not only with popular odium, but with the last severity of legal vengeance*.

What might naturally have been foretold and expected from the combined influence of all these causes, is at this moment exhibited in life and action at Paris. That I may neither repeat

* I am far from thinking, that all the priests, who refused to take the oaths to the new constitution, were, without exception, men of integrity; but, I charitably believe, that many of them were, being willing to hazard every thing, rather than take the name of God in vain; yet these were the persons who were butchered in prisons; and some of our Republicans at home, as well as in France, think there was less criminality in the deed, because it was not the purest blood of the nation. Again, persons who had sworn to the defence of the first constitution, might conscientiously scruple to submit to the second, though they had believed it to be a better one than it; and therefore they are now put to death as traitors, and their misfortunes are placed to the account of their own demerit, instead of being charged to the iniquities of their persecutors.

It is strange to observe, how men who talk of candour and liberality, often belie their sentiments when tried with respect to those, who think and act differently from what they themselves would have done in the same situation. Perjured and bloody democrates shall find more favour with them, than a Roman Catholic priest, or an aristocrate, who reverence oaths, and abhor cruelty.

peat what has been already detailed, nor add any description, which, though agreeable to the simplicity of truth, could hardly escape the suspicion of caricature.* I refer the reader to the complaints and reports laid before the Convention, relative to the present state of morals, and the general behaviour of the people in Paris*. After he has perused them, let him say, whether there can be found, in the history of human depravity, any parallel to such abounding iniquity.

If there are any among ourselves, who are the friends of religion and virtue, and yet conscious of a secret partiality to the present political measures in France, or who have any inclination to extenuate the crimes of the leading men there, I could wish them seriously to consider, whether the degeneracy of the morals of a people, if admitted as a fact, is not itself a strong presumption against any political system, rising out of such degeneracy, or connected with it.

“ Sed

* I have not at present the opportunity of collecting these, as they are separated, by long intervals, in the genuine accounts of the proceedings of the Convention inserted in the newspapers.

The reader, if he has leisure to peruse them, will be perfectly satisfied, that the people in France have reached the summit of depravity.

A member of the Convention lately complained, that licentiousness had come to such outrage, that daughters could no longer walk in the streets of Paris with safety by their fathers side.

“ Sed nihil, quod crudele utile, est enim hominum naturæ, quam sequi debemus, maxime inimica crudelitas *. As it is fair to infer the inherent depravity of the present political system in France, from its pernicious effects upon religion and virtue, so it is also fair to argue back, from the depravity of the morals of a people, against the probability of any beneficial revolution happening among them ; and, abstracting altogether from the facts already introduced, we are warranted to augur, from the moral characters of the reformers, and of the people in general, what the nature and success of their political work is likely to be. Persons, acquainted with general history, will not expect any benefit from a revolution, at a period, when scepticism, irreligion, licentiousness, and selfishness, are predominant in every rank and profession †. If the most forward candidates for the important

* Cicero de officiis.

† This argument might be carried farther than what is necessary for supporting my observation. A people, in a state of gross depravity, are not only incapable of rearing a good government, if they are already placed under a bad one ; but, they are rendered incapable, by gross depravity, of preserving a free and happy government, if they have hitherto enjoyed it. Was not the patriotism of Brutus demonstrated, from the experiment, to have been visionary and romantic ? For what purpose did Cæsar fall by many wounds, in the Senate House ?

important task of reforming government, either in France or any other country, are, in their several stations, the least distinguished for the steadiness of their principles and the disinterestedness of their actions; and the least disposed to do away abuses connected with their own gain and privileges; if they have already disavowed the first principles of religion, and seem to be but little anxious even about maintaining reputation for purity of moral character, and think that their patriotism may atone for these essential deficiencies; what sort of a reformation; what success can we expect, from any political change, projected and conducted by such men? I conclude my observations on this part of the subject, by coinciding, at least in one sentiment, with a set of authors, who are far from being severely censorious of the character of our reformers at home.

“ We have little confidence in any man as a
 “ firm and faithful supporter of the cause of
 “ freedom, unless we see him, at the same time
 “ a firm friend, and practical adherent to the
 “ cause of virtue *.”

From

House? A people, dissipated by public shews, profligate by bribes and donations; and callous by the familiarity of proscriptions and assassinations, could not again resume the spirit and the virtues, essential to Republican freedom.

* Monthly Review, September.

From the above representations, of the truth of which I am myself fully persuaded, every true friend to humanity, liberty, religion and morality, must behold the present condition of France with distress and horror. These feelings must be heightened, from an apprehension, that there are not wanting among ourselves some persons so weak or so wicked, as not to hold in detestation the present rulers and measures in France, and perhaps to wish in their hearts for such political changes at home, as must unavoidably expose their country to the risk of all the miseries with which that nation is visited. Why else are they so slow and reluctant in giving credit to the atrocious and abominable deeds which have been transacted there; and, when they can no longer resist evidence, why are they so anxious to palliate the guilt of their authors? Whence that propensity to anticipate the misfortunes of our arms, and that eagerness to circulate them upon slight and suspicious authority? Why do they listen to the news of victories obtained over our enemies with confusion and disappointment? Why are they at such pains to divert the public resentment from the insidious projects of the Convention for embroiling our domestic peace, and the unprovoked hostilities brought home to ourselves, by arraigning the usurpations of foreign princes in a distant

distant country, where perhaps it is impossible for us to interfere with any advantage to the oppressed, and without the most certain mischief to ourselves? Why such unseasonable declamations upon the evil of war; and why load that, in which we are now engaged, with the imputation of misfortunes, which, they assuredly know, have sprung from causes, which the continuance of peace could not have counteracted *?

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* Persons, who disapprove of the war with France, charge ministry and their adherents with inconsistency, because they have not endeavoured to prevent the division of Poland. That event, the friends of liberty, in every country, certainly behold with indignation, and consider it as full evidence of the criminal ambition, and oppressive spirit of the several princes, who have combined in such an iniquitous project. But, if oppression and injustice, committed in foreign countries, were a just cause for going to war, would it not be in vain ever to hope for any interval of peace. Nor perhaps are the persons, who state the case of Poland, serious in proposing it as an object of our interference; but they think, that the same prudent policy ought to have prevented us from taking any share in the war with France. But is there really any person of discernment, who does not perceive the wide difference of our relative situation, at the present period, with respect to France, and to Poland. Whatever the crimes of the French have been, and however much the object of private indignation, yet it is admitted, that they could not have justified public resentment, or the nations entering into a war against them, so long as those crimes were indifferent, I speak in a political view, indifferent to us. But were they so, or

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I am persuaded from my own knowledge, that there are many persons in this country, who

was the hostile aspect of the measures of the French Convention imaginary; or deduced by any forced construction? Suppose, that the Convention had just passed the decree of the 19th November, without taking any steps for carrying it into execution; yet Britain had reasons for apprehending danger from this decree, more than any other nation, that was not immediately contiguous to France, or already engaged in war with her. France was not far from Britain; the two nations had, for centuries, been rivals and inveterate enemies to each other; the opulence of Britain was an irresistible allurements for making the experiment of fraternization there, as soon as it was practicable; I am ashamed to add, that the dispositions of many of the British subjects, a premature desire to coalesce with France, and a predilection for her politics, an evidence of giddiness and love of novelty, more dangerous than a predilection for her fashions, all contributed to inspire the Convention with the hope of success. But, when it not only resolved but acted, when its armies entered the territories of our allies, notwithstanding a previous intimation from the court of Britain of the indispensable obligations by which she was bound to assist them; and when France, not satisfied with what she had already done, though, by implication, amounting to the declaration of war, actually made a formal declaration of it; is there any person, of candour and penetration, who will contend, that the war, upon our part, was wanton, precipitate, or unjust? Nay, was it possible to avoid it?

It is therefore a gross misrepresentation, to state a resentment of the crimes of the French, however atrocious they may have been, as the original motive of the war; though, when

who abhor the late proceedings of the French,
but, at the same time, are anxious for the re-
formation

when necessarily and unavoidably engaged in it, the suppression of those crimes, and the deliverance of an immense nation from the extremity of oppression and wretchedness, connected as it is with our own future safety, may, in consistency with the purest generosity, the strictest propriety, and the soundest policy, be made an ultimate object of that war. While the philanthropic heart deploras the calamities of war, it will derive consolation from the hope, that the present one into which we have entered from no less cogent, than justifiable motives of self-defence, may, under the auspices of a righteous Providence, prove the means of stopping an overflowing torrent of iniquity; and of terminating the miseries which overwhelm such a vast proportion of our fellow creatures.

It is strange, how entirely our patriots have changed their political sentiments respecting France. The enormous growth of the Russian empire, and the encroachments upon Poland, universally foreseen, made no impression upon their liberal feelings, while they adhered to the sage maxim, that charity begins at home; and that all our money, and military force, ought to be reserved for defending ourselves against France, the restless unrelenting foe of Britain. At that period, the military force of France was restricted, compared with what it now is, and the dispositions, as well as the interest of the court, were strong securities for her remaining in peace; and at present, when that immense nation is armed and let loose upon the world, and breathing out threatenings and slaughter against Britain, all fear of danger is asleep, and, like a legion of Quixotes, we must sally forth to redress the grievances of Poland.

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formation of abuses in our own government, which they think may be accomplished without

It is unfair to charge the bankruptcies, which have lately happened, to the account of the war. Overtrading, and overtrusting, or a rage for speculation, encouraged by the facility of credit, are the true causes of the present bankruptcies. Warehouses were overstocked, and it must have been impossible to find a vent for the goods on hand, even supposing that the market had been as wide as it formerly was. But still it may be true, that the war has been the occasion of circumscribing the demands for British goods in some places, and excluding them altogether from others. The money of France and Germany is diverted into other channels, and the knowledge of this has been the occasion of withdrawing credit, and making a scrutiny into the circumstances of individuals, by those who had trusted them. If customers are daily falling off from the man who is trading with my money, it will naturally excite my anxiety, and make me impatient for the return of it. But, even in this view, I still contend, that it is not our own war that is the cause of the evil. It is the war of Prussia, of the empire, of Spain, and of France; nay, our own war becomes necessary to remedy, and more speedily to bring to an end the very mischief with which it is charged. Suppose, that a dozen of my customers, or indeed, that most of the substantial persons of the village in which I live have embarked jointly in an expensive law-suit; and that I have an equal interest in the question litigated, but, from a mortal hatred to law-suits, have declined taking any part in it. I begin, however, to feel the inconvenience, arising from the money of my customers being withheld from my shop; they find that, though they have right upon their side, yet the suit is likely to stand still from the want of ready cash to pay the

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out resorting to violent means, or any danger of the awful calamities described in the preceding pages. Thinking and feeling as they do, it were to be wished, that they would attentively retrace the history of France from the present moment for two or three years back, and observe, whether, though many steps have intervened, the tragical events, which they now deplore, have not had their origin in some of those very measures now proposed for obtaining the reformatations, upon which their hearts are bent. When they have done this, let them conscientiously say, whether there is not at least a possibility, that similar beginnings may lead to similar ends, that the same causes may produce the same effects? Whether clamours against the abuses of government, continually kept alive, may

the lawyers fees: They now begin to teaze me with their importunities to become a partner in their cause, and say to me, Sir, it is now past a doubt, that, unless you help us with your money and influence, we must all be ruined together; do pray, look to your own interest; we have a good cause, lend your name to the process; we ask you to pay no more than your fair proportion; and, if you will do this, we will bring the cause quickly to a decision, and all come back, and spend our money as formerly in your shop.

Let it be seriously considered, if the common interest of landholders, merchants, manufacturers, &c. does not require Britain to help her allies with all her might, that she may bring, to a more speedy termination, a war, which, if it lasts long, must be ruinous to her, though she takes no part in it.

may not at length produce a hatred to the government itself? Whether discontent, fomented and propagated by designing men, may not ripen into insurrection? Whether the constant holding out of equality to the people; and magnifying objections to privileged orders, may not, at length, terminate in the destruction of just subordination, or rather in a complete inversion of the condition of men? Whether libelling the sentences of the established courts of justice, and disparaging the characters of the judges, may not entirely enervate their authority, embolden seditious, ill designing men, and at length remove all controul over violence, and oppression? Whether, inveighing against religious establishments may not engender a contempt for religion in general! And whether, the concurrence of all these effects may not, at length, exhibit an exact counterpart to those scenes of guilt and calamity, which have ruined France? As friends to their country and to mankind, let them say, whether the removal of slight and partial inconveniencies, or the attainment of hypothetical benefits, ought to be prosecuted at such a hazard?

There are many, who agree to the principles upon which these observations are founded. They would not wish to change the constitution, or to do any thing, even from the motive of redressing

redressing abuses, or obtaining improvements, which might expose it to danger. But, believing the constitution itself to be in danger from abuses, which have probably been exaggerated to them, they think that extraordinary measures ought to be adopted for the redress of these, and that some medium or compromise might be found out for healing and strengthening the system, without the hazard of breaking it to pieces. Nay, if they did not believe this to be the case, they would never lend their name to remonstrances and petitions, or league with associations for a reform. They would rather "bear those ills they have, than fly to others that they know not of." Now, it deserves the serious consideration of those persons, whether there is a possibility of deviating from the established forms of the constitution, without endangering the constitution itself? Is it possible, in the first instance, to make application to the Legislature by associations of men, which have no constitutional form, no legal existence; and, supposing the Legislature unfavourable to such application, to have recourse to the substitution of a newly created, temporary authority, for abolishing grievances and accomplishing reformation; is it possible to advance so far in innovation without supplanting and overturning the constitution?

tion? Associations of men seldom adhere to the simplicity of their first intentions. Suppose an association formed for the redress of grievances, every member would have an equal right to produce his list of them, and while their common strength and influence depend upon their indivisibility, all the members are under a strong temptation to adopt the spirit of concession and temporizing, and thus their collected demands would be continually increasing, and at length contain such a multiplicity of innovations as must amount to a total change of the government. Suppose the obstinacy, or the corruption of the Legislature, should render it either unwilling, or unfit, to promote some great political reform urged by the general voice of the nation, and should induce the necessity of creating a new, subsidiary authority solely for accomplishing that specific end, after which its commission was to terminate. Suppose this convention, for we shall give it that name, should comprehend the very essence of national wisdom and virtue, yet it is not easy to conceive the possibility of its members consulting and deciding, with freedom and independence, according to their own judgement. Can we believe that, at such a juncture, the public mind would be at rest? would associations and clubs discontinue their deliberations, and suspend their influence? would they
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claim no authority over a body of men, which has probably derived its trust and consequence from their importunity and threats ; would not curiosity, hope, anxiety, put the people into a state of giddiness and agitation ? If, in such a situation, the public safety required the superintending vigilance of military force, would not the existence of such a force, though it might not overawe or corrupt the acting authority, yet would it not excite a jealousy of having done so ; blast the credit of the wisest resolutions which might result from the deliberations of the Convention, disappoint expectations, and finally aggravate discontents. But suppose no influence, either from the people or the government, to dictate or intimidate ; and our Convention to have accomplished its object, and to have acquitted itself so far with fidelity ; yet is there no danger from inherent corruption ? Has not the taste and experience of power a quickening influence upon the dormant seeds of ambition ; inspiring the desire, while it affords the means of prolonging and establishing its duration ? The ancient examples of the decemviri and dictators ; the modern ones of the long parliament in England, and the present Convention in France ; are monitory examples of the dangerous tendency of newly created powers to usurpation and permanence.

It must be readily admitted, that all our conjectures, concerning the distant effects of political measures and expedients, must be attended with uncertainty, which is a good argument for our distrust, even of those which have the most flattering appearance. But, amidst the variety of events that might be supposed to occur upon a Revolution in the government of Britain, there is not one that seems more probable, or indeed that approaches nearer to a certainty, than the ruin of those men, who prematurely start as candidates for the honour and rewards of patriotism. At the commencement of the struggle, they run a great hazard of becoming victims to the vengeance of the government against which they conspire. But suppose, which God forbid, that all their projects for the public and themselves should be realised ; and that they should be appointed to exercise the most honourable functions under the new adopted system of political regeneration ; will this insure their future safety ? The day of their exaltation is the date of their proscription. Their advancing popularity, during the continuance of the struggle, has been secretly envied by their fellows, who have not been so successful. The permanent establishment of their preeminence would be a grievance more galling and intolerable to their rivals, than any they have shaken

shaken off. From the various declarations they have made, adapted to the vicissitudes of fortune during the dependence of the contest, from the strain of their conversation with persons of opposite sentiments and interests; from the multiplied artifices and intrigues employed to gain different factions or individuals; it will not be difficult to collect ample materials for the charge of inconsistency, infidelity in their trust, and treachery to the constitution. Nay, recourse may be had to the sentiments they professed, the offices they held, the persons with whom they associated, previous to the existence of the new constitution, in order to substantiate articles of the blackest crimination. Another revolution will be contrived, rather than that they should not be disgraced; and between their disgrace and condemnation, there will be only a short interval. Let them remember the fate of Bailli, Rolland, Custine, &c.

Nor is there any better prospect in reserve for those persons, who, disclaiming all selfish motives, believe, and reveal it to their friends in confidence, that a Revolution would redound to the benefit of their country, either by relieving the people from taxes altogether, or alleviating the burden of them; or enlarging and securing liberty, by a reform of the representation, or a diffusion of political power.

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I shall not at present enter into the refutation of erroneous opinions, generally entertained concerning the effects of taxes, which would at least shew, that they are not so hurtful as represented. Admitting, that the people are made poorer, or their fortunes reduced by the payment of taxes; and admitting, what indeed is impossible, that a Revolution would exempt them altogether from taxes, would they actually become richer or less straitened, than by paying them under a settled government and established authority? The reverse of the proposition may be demonstrated. Let the certain loss arising from a Revolution, or its unavoidable and immediate effects upon the pecuniary interests of men of every order and profession, be calculated; will they destroy or overbalance the savings and emoluments, derived to the people from the abolition or abatement of taxes. This is a fair and obvious statement of the question, and, upon the solution of it, our decision upon the advantages or disadvantages of a Revolution must depend. We shall suppose the value of the total aggregate property of the nation to amount to a certain definite sum, 10,000 millions. Money, land, stock, raw commodities of home growth, and imported from foreign markets, and manufactured goods, are the sundry articles, which compose the ostensible property of the nation,

nation. But to these we may also add corporeal strength and dexterity, mental ingenuity and talents ; and, in short, every thing upon which any value is set, or that can be employed for the benefit of the proprietor, and the community of which he is a member. As money is the representation or sign of all the articles enumerated, it is continually afloat, in varying proportions, among the proprietors of them ; and the person, who holds the greatest share of money, has it in his power to purchase the greatest quantity of land, stock, and manufactures, and is therefore esteemed the richest. It requires no profound discernment to prove, that the owners of all the various species of commodities have an essential connection with, and dependence upon each other ; that the prosperity of one contributes to the prosperity of all the rest ; and that the loss of one detracts from the gain or profit of the rest. The reciprocal demands upon, or call it their purchases from each other, will be adjusted to the abundance of the commodities which they severally possess, and the gain or profit of their trades and professions. The wealth of the landholder will depend upon the prosperity of the many ; in proportion as labourers, manufacturers, artists, multiply and thrive, their demands for food, cloathing, and every thing produced by land will increase ;

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its value be enhanced; and the rent of the proprietor raised. In proportion as the rent of land is raised, the demands or expences of the landholder will increase, and he, in his turn, will disburse more money among labourers, artisans, and those who sell the several articles of ordinary provisions and accommodations; and these, not being sufficient to exhaust his accumulated rents, ingenuity will be employed to devise new embellishments for the amusement of fancy, and the merchant encouraged to import the fruits of foreign climes, and the works of foreign manufacture, to supply the demands of luxury, and multiply the channels of expenditure.

From this view of a joint stock, or united interest, it is evident, that whatever diminishes the *quantum* of national property, must diminish the prosperity or proportion of wealth belonging to all the various classes, or individuals, among whom it is divided. It is of no consequence with what class, or individual, the loss begins; because, like the electrical shock, it will quickly pervade the whole body who stand in contact. Slighter losses may occur even in the most prosperous condition of society; but, in so wide a compass, they make no durable impression, and are easily repaired by the resources within the reach of a government of established

established credit. But the depredation, derangement, and subversion of property, occasioned by the convulsions of civil war, and the suspension or change of a government, must make a deep encroachment upon the national stock, and be felt by all its members. In such a crisis, the business and occupations, by which all classes of men subsist, are at a stand. Credit and confidence are withdrawn from some; their just claims or debts are withheld from others; the labours of the industrious are frustrated; the demands of luxury discontinued; the national stock or property reduced; and every individual in proportion rendered poorer. Thus, the question, stated with precision and accuracy, will be, not how much every man is richer by exemption from taxes, even were such an object attainable by a Revolution, but how much he is poorer by the stagnation of his trade, in consequence of the ruin and bankruptcy of his customers, inseparable from that event. For a nation to attempt to extricate itself from debt, or to meliorate its condition by a remedy so desperate, would be just as infatuated, as it would be for a merchant, who holds the lease of a few acres, under the obligation of paying a very moderate rent, to enter into a concert with malicious creditors, to make a run upon the proprietor, and reduce him to bankruptcy, from
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the motive of being exempted from future incumbrance, though the profit he derived from his landlord's custom was tenfold the sum he could save from the discharge of his rent, promised to him by the persons, who expected to obtain the investment of the bankrupt's property.

There are many persons, neither so generous as to feel a superior attachment to the community at large, nor so selfish as to be absorbed in their own private interest alone, who are yet moved by a zealous concern for the particular class, or profession, to which they belong, and are partial to every project, apparently tending to the advancement of its reputation or interest. This more enlarged selfishness is not confined to men of any one particular rank or profession; and is often so little guided by reason, that it produces envy and grudging among those, whose reciprocal prosperity is linked by indissoluble bonds of connection. The landed, commercial, ecclesiastical, manufacturing interests, have been sometimes considered as repugnant to each other. Now, though it should be granted, that transient interferences may occur, and that care ought to be taken not to suffer the balance of power or wealth to incline too much to any of them; yet it may be demonstrated, that they have one common, indivisible

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interest

interest in maintaining the public order, and the stability and energy of Government. Independent of that communication of influence, already explained, and the certain, though more remote decay of one member, from the disease of another, it is evident, from that leveling and ravenous disposition which is excited by a contempt for Government, and far more by the suspension of it, as well as from recent facts in a neighbouring country, that they are all alike exposed, in such a desperate state of society, to violent depredation and final ruin. The landed gentlemen may behold, with little concern, a plan adopted by the existing power, for the depression and robbery of the church, and they may rejoice in the hope of a part of the spoil falling into their own hands. Persons, who have suddenly started into opulence, may look with an envious eye upon the prerogatives of titled proprietors, and the superior deference paid to the descendants of ancient families, whose rents are inferior to theirs; and the malevolent passions may be gratified by the abrogation of the dignity, and the confiscation of the fortunes of their rivals, not perceiving it to be the harbinger of their own destruction. The farmer considers the ruin of the landlord as a riddance from a burden, and while no demand is made upon him for rent, he applauds the wisdom and benevolence of those who have seized:

the helm of power. The merchant is hardened to the calamities of a class, whose depression has, in the first instance, contributed to his own elevation and consequence in the state. But mark the sequel : The success of rapaciousness increases its appetite, and stimulates its impetuosity. Having rioted in the spoils of the church, it must devote new materials for its gratification, by confiscating the estates of the aristocrats. Rapine, which set out under the pretext of expediency, next shelters itself under the sanction of law ; rank and property are made state crimes ; nor is it possible that it can stop here. Subversion of property, and the uncertainty in which it is held, has brought on a stagnation of labour and trade, and reduced the multitude to beggary, as effectually as if the Government had grinded them with taxes, or seized their property by arbitrary violence. Necessity knows no law ; the hungry must be fed, the naked clothed ; property must be condemned wherever it can be found ; the merchant must render an inventory of his goods ; the farmer must measure out his corn ; and they must rot in chains if they do it not with fidelity ; nay, perhaps, if they fall short of the expectation of the greedy inquisitor*.

Thus

* A member lately observed in the Convention, that the merchants had come in the place of the aristocrats, and that

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Thus every species of property is at length absorbed in one chaos of oppression and plunder. A fire breaks out in the palace, adjacent to a great city; the people, from a dislike to the royal inhabitant, decline giving the assistance, and making the exertions, which might easily have extinguished it; it next spreads to the contiguous apartments of the courtiers, which have been prepared for destruction by combustibles thrown into them by perfidious servants and dependants. The multitude thus far is well pleased with the spectacle of desolation; but now, behold, the breeze, suddenly springing up, has waisted the flames to the neighbouring village; the violence of the conflagration defies all the efforts of the interested proprietor; and the transient gleam of malignant joy, excited by the ashes of the Royal and aristocratic structures, is succeeded by loud lamentations over universal wreck and devastation.

But though, from the waste of property, introduced by the convulsions of Government, the generality may be ruined, yet those, who had nothing to lose, can be made no worse; and, like the plunderers at a conflagration, may

there would be a necessity for adopting the same severity towards them, by alienating their property to the public use, and levelling them with the people.

may abstract a part of the goods, which they have carried off, under the kind pretext of saving them for their owners. It is admitted, that the needy and desperate may be, and are the only persons who can profit by the convulsions of a state; but still, when it is considered how uncertain the success of any one individual must be in the general scramble which attends the dissolution of Government, how much the value of property is depreciated, and how precarious its tenure in a state of turbulence and anarchy, and how small the chance which a single person has of being rendered either richer or happier by the change; it will be agreed, that nothing but extreme depravity of heart can account for any villain, of moderate understanding, being so infatuated and desperate, as to wish for a Revolution. For to resume once more the simile I have already introduced: Like persons who go about pilfering during the rage of the conflagration, they incur the various risks of being detected and thrown into the flames, or of having their booty ravished out of their hands by the superior strength of their fellow-labourers in iniquity.

There still remains another class of men, not comprehended in any of the above descriptions, who are destitute of ostensible property, but possessing intellectual talents, which either they
 themselves

themselves estimate too highly, or the world in general too low, they are piqued because they have not met with notice and rewards due to their merits. Such persons, too much alive to a selfish sensibility, and not enough restrained by steady principles of virtue, fondly flatter themselves, that they will be the first consulted upon the plan of regenerating Government; and therefore that its dissolution will prove the harvest of their talents, and equally promote their fame and their interest. Deceived in over-rating their capacity for practical politics, they are still more so, in expecting trust and pre-eminence in a juncture of national distraction, and under the predominance of anarchy. The circumstances, attendant upon a Revolution, operate to the depression and injury of literary men, more than any other professional body. The din of war, the conflict of factions, the ardour of political contests, are but little favourable either to the composition or perusal of literary works. A knowledge of living men and characters, from which literary men have been debarred by solitude and study, are of more avail at this juncture, than the whole compass of science, and the most profound philosophy. The consciousness of intellectual superiority, an over-weening attachment to their own opinions; the sternness and inflexibility of their manners;

manners; their blunt contempt for ignorance and absurdity, render their presence irksome and disgusting to the illiterate, upstart senators, with whom they are associated. In the progression of tumultuary power, every species of superiority is, first undervalued, next hated, at length persecuted, and the productions of art and genius treated with the same Gothic barbarity, which has wrecked its vengeance upon genealogical trees, the charters of the nobility, and the images of the saints. But supposing it true, that, in the first instance, a Revolution must certainly prove fatal to the possessors of property, and also disappoint the expectations of those who have concurred in it with a view to meliorate their own fortunes, or those of their associates; yet might it not be subservient to the introduction of such an improved system of government, as shall at length outweigh past calamities, and contribute to the more extensive and permanent happiness of mankind. There is certainly more disinterestedness than wisdom in the hypothesis: For put the case, that any nation or community really had it in its power, deliberately, freely, and without interruption or disturbance, to devise and fix its own government; yet to those persons, who are best acquainted with the extent of human capacity, and the history of mankind, it must still appear

a very doubtful point, whether such a community was likely to chuse with wisdom, or to attain a more happy political condition, than those who traced the rudiments of their constitution to ages totally ignorant of political science, or to accidents and emergencies which excluded the interposition of counsel and deliberation: Thus, I say, it may appear to persons acquainted most intimately with human nature, because they will perceive strong reasons for suspecting, whether human capacity, with every advantage of original acuteness and acquired improvement, be adequate to the formation of such a system of government as can be reduced to practice, and which will afterwards supersede alterations or improvement. It would seem to be the intention of Providence, if we are warranted to deduce its intention from general history, and from experiments approaching, in any degree, to the case supposed, that civil government, like an indigenous plant, should spring up without plantation or culture, and grow to mature vigour, under the season of propitious accidents, discerned and improved by the wisdom of the patriot; that even its fruitless exuberances should be lopt off with a cautious and sparing hand, lest fancy be indulged and beauty promoted, at the expence of firmness and utility; and, in short, that every improvement

ment should be suggested by calm experience, rather than by the dictates of presumptuous speculation, and a headstrong, and fantastic patriotism. The decision of this question, however, can be of little importance, because mankind never were in a situation altogether free from the bias of prejudice and party; and more especially, during the ferment and agitation occasioned by great political convulsions. In such a crisis, the formation and settlement of the government must be left to the few leading demagogues, who owe their station, not to their wisdom or their virtue, but to their audacity, their hypocrisy, their violence, their popular eloquence, their unaccountable good fortune; or to those military commanders who, by their success, either gain the affections, or overawe the fears of the people. Under the direction of such men, the sole object of every political regulation, however varnished with the forms and pretexts of patriotism, will be the security and extension of their own power. "In all ages, and in every country, the subversion of the ancient government, and the violent struggles of the people, have terminated in despotism, whether it has been centered in one person, or lodged in many hands *."

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* Swift.

But, suppose that the government of this country were once overturned, is there any person, acquainted with the state of Europe, or with the interests and dispositions of persons of leading influence at home, who can seriously believe, that the resettlement of it would be left to the independent suffrages of the people, or to the advice of able and disinterested patriots. Nay, from the fraternizing system of the French Convention, and the multitudes of mankind, at its disposal, whose necessities and habits must render them dangerous in their own country ; and from the temper of those desperate men at home, who are smitten with the admiration of French liberty, is it not natural to conclude, that the latter would find, in the former, a reinforcement of coadjutors, sufficient to overpower the defenders of the constitution ? But would the defenders of the constitution, or the established powers, would they, instructed by the events which have lately happened and the example of their adversaries, decline the aid of foreign powers, who have an equal interest in controuling the extension of French usurpation ? Whichever of these happen to conquer, after a plentiful profusion of British blood, would become the arbiters, and perhaps, for centuries, the mercenary guardians of the constitution ; how dismal the prospect in either

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alternative? Is there a true friend to liberty, who does not think with horror of her being exposed to assassination by profane, blood-thirsty anarchists; or deformed and mangled by the rude hands of despotic auxiliaries? Ere that day approach, it will be the devout wish of every genuine patriot, that the grave may cover him from beholding the disgrace and sorrow of his beloved country.

But are there no grievances in our present condition? How are they to be removed? Is resistance in no case whatever to be allowed; or what are those circumstances, which render it necessary and lawful; and unite patriotism with morality and benevolence?

There is no government so perfect as to exclude the possibility of improvement, or to supersede the necessity of change and reformation. Adhering to the united counsels of religion, humanity, and prudence, the exertions of good citizens, for the redress of particular grievances, will be regulated by a joint respect to their magnitude, and the safety and probable efficiency of the means employed for the removal of them. Violent wrongs require violent remedies, and perhaps do not admit of a deliberate estimation of the probable effects of resorting to such remedies. Happy however are they, whose interest and duty concur in directing

recting their wishes and exertions to the preservation of the state and condition, in which they are already placed. Let all the complaints against the constitution, and the administration of government, be fairly stated. Let nothing be suppressed, nothing put down in malice. Is there any one of them, are all of them in the group, of such a magnitude, as to justify the desperate remedy of resorting to a revolution, or change in the government? But when it is considered, that, after all, the event must be uncertain, and most probably productive of an increase of evil; is there any person, who regards the dictates of humanity or prudence, that could indulge in his heart even a wish for such an experiment?

A very different opinion will be entertained by every person of penetration and candour, concerning the wisdom and morality of persons, who act against government, defensively, and those who act offensively; and the neglecting to attend to this important distinction has been the cause of involving, indiscriminately, in the same censure, or the same praise, all the opposers of government, however different their situations, and the motives of their conduct. When the rights of any individual, or corporate body, defined by explicit statute, or acquired by prescriptive possession, are
invaded

invaded by the arm of power; the individual or the society, that submitted tamely, or that did not employ every exertion for maintaining or recovering their established, indisputable, habitual rights, would be chargeable not only with pusillanimity, but treachery to the community at large. But, if any individual, or body of men, shall complain, that the immunities they enjoy, though the same, or more ample than their predecessors in the same rank and circumstances enjoyed, are not sufficient; if they shall complain, that their share of the representation, or of election, or of the administration of government, is not in proportion to their property, talents, interest; and if the violent enforcement of these demands be admitted as lawful and justifiable, it is evident, that neither the people, however happy their condition, nor the government, however excellent its form, could ever be at rest. Such demands may be sometimes founded in reason and justice, and the grant of them might contribute to the benefit of the universal body; but, in other cases, they may be factious, absurd, destructive to the constitution, and ruinous to the people themselves. What then is to be done? Let them be submitted to the deliberate discussion of the Legislature. If the Legislature be dilatory and reluctant in complying with them, it affords presumptive

sumptive grounds for suspecting, that they may possibly be inexpedient or hurtful, or at least, not of the consequence that the authors of them have imagined. This construction is no more than a piece of due respect to the existing authority of the Legislature. Let them be reconsidered, and, if the idea of their importance and utility remains unchangeable, the press is open; let them be submitted to the judgement of the public, I mean that part of the public, that is really capable of judging; but, in no case whatever, ought force to be called in to second argument; because it will next be called in to silence and overpower it. While we live in an age of light and candour, and while the general opinion of men of knowledge has such weight with the Legislature, and the Legislature itself a common interest with the people, and ample provisional authority for adjusting public measures to the juncture of circumstances and the prejudices of the times, our case can never be a desperate one; and there is even encouragement to hope, that every solid, practicable improvement will, though perhaps not so quickly as we could wish, be adopted and interwoven into the constitution.

I shall conclude this treatise with a few propositions, founded on fact and reason, and which, in our present situation, will, I hope,
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have an influence upon the sentiments and conduct of those, who are well affected to the constitution, and anxious for preserving the peace of the country.

I. There are imperfections in every constitution of government : our own cannot be free from them ; and abuses and corruptions have undoubtedly crept into the executive department, which, every man, who is not servilely devoted to the court and the ministers, must acknowledge, and earnestly wish to have reformed.

II. Neither the imperfections of our constitution, nor the abuses of our government, are so many, or so great, as has been represented of late, sometimes by men of knowledge and principle ; but, more frequently, by persons who, from disappointment, pique, or a spirit of change, are unfriendly to government, or, from weakness and credulity, unreasonably prejudiced against it ; and, perhaps, malignity itself cannot produce a single example of our present Sovereign's having discovered any wish or inclination to stretch prerogative, or encroach upon the right of his subjects.

III. There are peculiar reasons, arising from the confusion of affairs abroad, and the tempers of men at home, which will render every true friend to liberty and virtue more reserved and delicate

delicate than he would have been, at any former time, either in stating public grievances, or censuring ministers, or urging very proper amendments with too much zeal and importunity. Every faithful subject will act with the same tenderness towards the government, that a good hearted man would do towards his friend, distressed by any interruption of his prosperity, or by ill treatment from his neighbours. If I believed, that the estate of my banker was sufficient for the discharge of all his debts; and that his intentions were honourable, and his conduct in general discreet; I would not call in the money I have lent him, nor push him for payment of a trifling sum, when his circumstances have fallen under suspicion, and all his creditors are running upon him. I would not upbraid a parent for his past imprudence, in the presence of an ungrateful child; though that ingratitude might be owing, in part, to the parent's imprudence.

IV. The same feelings, which excite such abhorrence against the cruelties of the French, and a tenderness and respect for our own government, will lead all, who are under their influence, to wish for the benign interposition of the Legislature, in those cases which come home to their hearts. The abolition of the slave trade is an object of such importance, and

so deeply interesting to persons of sensibility, that other objects of reform vanish into nothing when they come into competition with it. For this, many of the best friends of government would almost be willing to compound; and, if it could be obtained, would say with Simeon of old, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation*."

V. Improvements of the constitution, which appear the most important, ought still to be introduced with caution and deliberation. "Great changes may be made in a government, and yet the form of it may continue, and the balance be held; but large intervals of time must pass between every such innovation, enough to melt down and make it of a piece with the constitution †." "It is proper also not to try new experiments in the political body, unless the danger be urgent, and the utility evident; and great care ought to be taken

* Many of the persons, who are partial to the French, and most violent for a reform at home, treated the abolition of the slave trade, a few years ago, with unfeeling contempt. Let us separate from these men: It is impossible, that our pure cause can derive either advantage or honour from their support. Our own characters must be exposed to danger from associating with men of violence. *Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go; lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.*

† Swift.

" keh, that the desire of reformation may oc-
 " casion the change, and not the desire of the
 " change plead for the reformation. Let us
 " stand upon the old paths, and see and ask for
 " the good way and walk therein. Those
 " are the most dangerous discontents where the
 " fear is greater than the feeling. For feeling
 " has bounds, but fear has none *."

VI. It is a maxim founded in the nature of
 man, and confirmed by the experience of ages,
 that, without religion, or the fear and acknow-
 ledgement of deity, no civil government can be
 maintained and supported ; and to this maxim
 it may be added, that the principles of the
 Christian religion, rooted in the hearts of a peo-
 ple, must ever be the firmest bond for upholding
 the authority of the magistrate, and preserving the
 peace of society. By the followers of the Prince
 of peace, the most specious plans of improvement
 will never be pursued, at the hazard of involving
 their fellow citizens in strife and blood.

The friends of Christianity have of late been
 both pleased and surprised to find, that the gross
 impiety and blasphemy of the French have given
 offence to many at home, whom they did not
 know to be irritable upon the point of religion.
 The respectable persons have now professed for it,
 has been hitherto so shy and reserved, as to escape
 the notice of those to whom their general sen-

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* Baron.

timents and conduct have been open and familiar. Though they never have been known to insinuate any thing against Christianity, yet they have declined the giving their countenance to those institutions, which, not only its vulgar, but its enlightened friends consider as essential to a Christian profession.

It is not, because they consider the utility of religion to be confined merely to persons of low birth and narrow education. It is not, because men, who are secretly convicted of the omission of important duties, or of the practice of particular vices, have still prescribed to themselves certain boundaries of transgression, and therefore think they *do well to be angry* with those who go beyond them. It is because they have not been enough attentive to the connection between social and personal religion, and the indispensable importance of public ordinances, namely, the sanctifying the Sabbath, attending public worship, remembering the death of Christ, for the maintaining the credit and influence of Christianity in the world: it is because they have not been impressed with a just sense of their own consequence, and the powerful influence of their example in moulding the sentiments and manners of the people.

A regard to their own interest, it is to be hoped, will in future insure that external decorum, which

a sense of propriety, and more exalted motives, have hitherto failed to produce in the conduct of the persons to whom these observations refer. The neglecting of the ordinances of religion, which is naturally imputed to an indifference for it, must, in every view, be hurtful to those who are placed in the higher ranks of life. If their vassals or dependants still retain an attachment to religion, their neglect or contempt for it appears such a blot, or deficiency of character, as undermines all respect for it, and counteracts the influence of their example, when it is otherwise pure and unexceptionable. They are justly severe in censuring persons below them, who deviate from truth, sobriety, and honesty: Now, they ought to consider, that the people, having been taught to estimate the public duties of religion as equally indispensable with those which are purely moral, unavoidably, in their turn, think ill of their superiors for neglecting the former; and fall from that esteem and deference which contributes to the dignity and influence of individuals, and the general good order of society. This, however, is the most harmless effect arising from the irreligion, or at least from the absence of any profession of it in men of great fortune and station. Their example silently and insensibly works upon the people themselves. The prejudices of better times, and
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the remembrance of the exemplary decency of the parent, may fortify their aged dependants against any impression being made upon them by the levity and irreligion of the successor. But the young and rising generation, taking the model and fashion of their manners from their superiors to whom they have been accustomed to look up, as more enlightened and happy than themselves, will gradually recede from the strictness of their fathers, and relinquish the sound principles they received from them. The tenants and servants will soon become as fashionable as their landlords and masters, in shewing a contempt for the ordinances of religion.

When public worship comes to be generally abandoned; when the Sabbath shall no longer be distinguished from any other day of the week; when persons of every station fly from opportunities of testifying their respect to the memory of the best Benefactor of mankind, a devoted people will be prepared to receive the abolition of every form of religion, not only with tame submission, but with cordial applause.

If *the life and power of godliness* had not been almost universally extinguished in France, a convention of atheists would not have dared to sanction their execrable principles with the authority of law.

Since

Since the last sheet of this Treatise has been sent to the press, we have received the following authentic intelligence, relative to the proceedings in Paris with respect to religion.

At the sitting on the 5th of December, a letter was read, amidst the applause of the galleries, written by Colombeau, who mentions, That at Nancy every kind of religious worship is abolished ; that every object which could recal religion to the imagination was destroyed, and that all the churches were shut.

Danton addressed the following discourse to the French Legislators : " Every Mediator between man and the Divinity is perfect quackery ; all revealed religion is a human invention, in its principle it is imposture, and, in its effects, a series of superstition, &c. &c. &c."

There has been transmitted to a gentleman in this place, an account of an act of profaneness, and contempt of the Author of Christianity, lately committed by the people in Paris ; the circumstances of which so much exceed everything outrageous and blasphemous that has yet happened even there, that the horror with which they have impressed my own mind, prevents me from transcribing them, or communicating them to the public.

F I N I S.

Since the last issue of the Tribune has been sent to the press, we have received the following authentic intelligence relative to the proceedings in Paris with respect to religion. At the sitting on the 21st of December, a letter was read, signed the chairman of the gallery, and written by Colombari, who mentions that every sort of religious worship is abolished; that every object which could be calculated to excite religion was destroyed, and that all the religions were burnt.

Danton addressed the following discourse to the French Legislature: "My Mediators have been sent to the provinces to discover the all-revealed religion, and in his efforts, as the French Constitution, Sec. 2, Art. 1, Sec. 1, there has been translated to a gentleman in this place, an account of an act of profanation, and contempt of the Author of Christianity, committed by the people in Paris; the circumstances of which to much exceed everything dangerous and blasphemous that has yet happened even there; that the horror with which they have inspired my own mind, prevents me from translating them, or communicating them to the public."

